

First named inventor: Oakeson
Serial no. 09/873,194
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In the claims

1. (currently amended) An apparatus that stores bid information for services in a computer network, the computer network coupling processors and a client, wherein the client submits a job request for execution by one or more of the processors, comprising:

a service bus coupled to the computer network, wherein the service bus is coupled to the client and the processors;

a job ticket service coupled to the service bus, the job ticket service capable of storing a job ticket related to the job request; and

a bidding service coupled to the service bus, wherein the bidding service is capable of posting a notice of the job request, and wherein one or more of the processors submit bids to complete the job request, the bids comprising bid information, and wherein the job ticket service stores winning bid information with the job ticket,

wherein the job ticket is stored as an object comprising:

a job identifier identifying the job request to which the job ticket is related;

a service identifier identifying the job ticket service storing the job ticket;

a task section defining the job ticket; and,

a control data section including at least programming to complete the job ticket.

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the bidding service comprises:

an evaluation module that evaluates the submitted bids; and

an ranking algorithm that ranks the submitted bids on the basis of the evaluation.

3. (original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the evaluation module comprises client-supplied evaluation criteria.

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4. (original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the evaluation module comprises industry-standard evaluation criteria.
5. (original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the ranking algorithm includes weighting factors.
6. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the bid information is provided to the client, and wherein the client selects the winning bid.
7. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the bidding service selects the winning bid.
8. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the job ticket is a XML object.
9. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the object of the job ticket comprises is organized in a tree data structure having multiple branches, wherein the bidding service posts a notice for one or more of the multiple branches, and wherein the bidding service determines a winning bid for each of the multiple branches.
10. (currently amended) A method for using a job ticket service to store bid information for electronic services in a computer network, the computer network coupling processors and a client, wherein the client submits a job request for execution by one or more of the processors, comprising:
 - receiving a job request from the client;
 - posting a notice of the job request at a job ticket service center, the job ticket service center generating a job ticket corresponding to the job request;

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receiving bids from one or more of the processors;
evaluating the bids;
selecting a winning bid, wherein the winning bid includes bid information; and
storing the bid information with the job ticket,
wherein the job ticket is stored as an object comprising:
a job identifier identifying the job request to which the job ticket is related;
a service identifier identifying the job ticket service storing the job ticket;
a task section defining the job ticket; and,
a control data section including at least programming to complete the job ticket.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein ~~the evaluating step~~ the bids comprises evaluating the submitted bids against client-supplied evaluation criteria.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein ~~the evaluating step~~ the bids comprises evaluating the submitted bids against industry standard evaluation criteria.
13. (original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:
applying a ranking algorithm to the evaluated bids; and
ranking the evaluated bids according to the ranking algorithm.
14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising:
supplying the ranked bids to the client; and
receiving a selection of the winning bid from the client.
15. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising selecting the winning bid from the ranked bids according to a standard algorithm.

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16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the standard algorithm includes weighting factors.

17. (currently amended) A method for controlling completion of a job ticket in a networked environment, wherein a plurality of processors compete for selection to perform tasks related to the job ticket, comprising:

defining one or more tasks to complete the job ticket;

assigning performance criteria for each of the one or more tasks;

posting a notice in the environment for one or more of the one or more tasks;

receiving bids from one or more of the plurality of processors for one or more of the one or more tasks;

comparing the received bids for one or more of the one or more tasks to the assigned performance criteria; and

selecting a processor to complete a task based on the comparison,

wherein the job ticket is stored as an object comprising:

a job identifier identifying the job request to which the job ticket is related;

a service identifier identifying the job ticket service storing the job ticket;

a task section defining the job ticket; and,

a control data section including at least programming to complete the job ticket.

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 17, wherein the performance criteria includes a minimum

performance criteria, and wherein ~~the comparing step~~ the received bids comprises:

comparing the received bids for the one or more tasks to the minimum performance criteria; and

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discarding any bid that does not meet the minimum performance criteria.

19. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the performance criteria comprises a plurality of performance factors, and further comprising weighting selected one of the plurality of performance factors.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 17, wherein ~~the selecting step~~ the processor comprises:

ranking the received bids based on the comparison, wherein a bid that is closest to the performance criteria has a best ranking; and

selecting a bid that has the best ranking.

21. (currently amended) A machine-readable program storage device, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executed by a machine in a networked environment, wherein a plurality of processors compete for selection to perform tasks related to a job ticket, the program of instructions performing a method steps for controlling completion of the job ticket, the method ~~steps~~, comprising:

defining one or more tasks to complete the job ticket;

assigning performance criteria for each of the one or more tasks;

posting a notice in the environment for one or more of the one or more tasks;

receiving bids from one or more of the plurality of processors for one or more of the one or more tasks;

comparing the received bids for one or more of the one or more tasks to the assigned performance criteria; and

selecting a processor to complete a task based on the comparison,

wherein the job ticket is stored as an object comprising:

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_____ a job identifier identifying the job request to which the job ticket is related;
_____ a service identifier identifying the job ticket service storing the job ticket;
_____ a task section defining the job ticket; and,
_____ a control data section including at least programming to complete the job ticket.